

mission against themselves rather than against the prerogative itself, and no fact is more patent in the records of this persecution than the readiness with which the persecuted profess their devotion to their sovereign. Sticklers for order in Church and State, like Whitgift, and even Parker, might smell sedition in every whiff of opposition to official authority. Parker's letters to Cecil and others, for instance, are full of suspicions and accusations of this sort. To Parker the Puritans were prime republicans. Even Martin Marprelate warmly rebuts the charge of fomenting sedition and anarchy as a slander invented by the bishops, and it is evident to every unprejudiced mind that the charge as against Puritan recusants was wholly unfounded. "Because," we read in one of these innumerable petitions from the nonconforming inmates of Newgate, "we would have bishops unlorded according to God's Word, therefore it is said we seek the overthrow of the civil magistrates. Because we say all bishops and ministers are equal, and therefore may not exercise their sovereignty over one another, therefore they say we shall be for levelling the nobility of the land. Because we find fault with the *regime* of the Church as drawn from the pope, therefore they say we design the ruin of the State." Opposition to the hierarchy was not, in the view of these men, opposition to the sovereign ; and certainly, having regard to their countless professions of loyalty, their persecutors might have shown a little more readiness to discriminate between theory and practice, without the slightest danger to the constitutional authority of the queen. To exact a hard-and-fast conformity was at least injudicious, considering the small points originally at issue. It only fanned the spirit of resistance into attacking the institutions of the Anglican Church themselves. The law was not so explicit in all points as to justify the extreme demands of Whitgift, though the powers he was entitled to exercise were large enough. But should not the Puritans have seceded from a Church, with some of whose institutions and practices they did not agree ? Secession would not have saved them from persecution, would in fact have made them the butt of the law, which made it a crime to be absent from the established worship. They were, moreover, entitled to demand "a further reformation" by the very assumption that had